

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method comprising:

~~receiving a first signal from a local device;~~

~~converting said first signal to a first network port packet data signal to emulate a local data signal port; and~~

transmitting a said first network port packet data signal to a first remote device over a network connection;

receiving a second network port packet data signal from the first remote device comprising a busy signal and the address of a second remote device on the network.

2-4. (canceled)

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

~~receiving a second network port packet data signal;~~ said second network port packet data signal comprising a busy signal indicating that said first remote device is busy, and an address of a second remote device on said network connection, said second remote device being serviced by said first remote device;

transmitting a third network port packet data signal to said second remote device requesting status information of said first remote device; and

receiving a fourth network port packet data signal from said second remote device, said fourth packet signal comprising said status information of said first remote device.

6. (currently amended) ~~The method of claim 4 further~~ A method comprising:

receiving a first network port packet data signal from a first remote device;

receiving a second ~~third~~ network port packet data signal from a second remote device while receiving said first ~~second~~ network port packet data signal from said first remote device;

sending a third ~~fourth~~ network port packet data signal to said second remote device, said third ~~fourth~~ network port packet data signal comprising a busy signal and an address of said first remote device on said network connection.

7-9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) ~~The apparatus of claim 8, wherein:~~ An apparatus comprising:

a first port to transmit a first network port packet signal to a first remote device;

~~said second port further comprises~~ a second port to receive a second network port packet data signal, said second network port packet data signal comprising a busy signal indicating that said first remote device is busy, and an address of a second remote device on said network connection, said second remote device being serviced by said first remote device.

said first port ~~plurality of circuit components~~ further comprises a first port ~~plurality of circuit components~~ to transmit a third network port packet data signal to said second remote device requesting status information of said first remote device; and

said first port further comprises a first port to receive a fourth network port packet data signal from said second remote device, said fourth packet data signal comprising said status information of said first remote device.

11. (currently amended) ~~The apparatus of claim 9, wherein:~~ An apparatus comprising:

a first port to receive a first network port packet signal from a first remote device;

~~said third port further comprises a second third port to receive a second third~~
network port packet data signal from a second remote device while receiving the first
~~second~~ network port packet data signal from said first remote device;

said first port ~~second plurality of circuit components~~ further comprises a first port
~~second plurality of circuit components~~ to send a third fourth network port packet data
signal to said second remote device, said third fourth network port packet data signal
comprising a busy signal and an address of said first remote device on said network
connection.

12-15. (canceled)

16. (currently amended) ~~The storage medium of claim 12, wherein said executing~~
~~instructions further operate to~~ A storage medium having stored therein a plurality of
machine executable instructions, wherein when executed, operate to transmit a first
network port packet data signal to a first remote device, receive a second network port
packet data signal, said second network port packet data signal comprising a busy signal
indicating that said first remote device is busy, and an address of a second remote device

on said network connection, said second remote device being serviced by said first remote device, transmit a third network port packet data signal to said second remote device requesting status information of said first remote device, and receive a fourth network port packet data signal from said second remote device, said fourth packet signal comprising said status information of said first remote device.

17. (currently amended) ~~The storage medium of claim 15, wherein said executing instructions further operate to~~ A storage medium having stored therein a plurality of machine executable instructions, wherein when executed, operate to receive a first network port packet data signal from a first remote device, receive a second third network port packet data signal from a second remote device while receiving said first second network port packet data signal from said first remote device, and send a third fourth network port packet data signal to said second remote device, said third fourth network port packet data signal comprising a busy signal and an address of said first remote device on said network connection.

18. (canceled)

19. (new) A method comprising:

transmitting a first network port packet data signal to a first remote device over a network connection;

receiving a second network port packet data signal from said first remote device including status information of the first remote device;

receiving a third network port packet data signal from a second remote device requesting said status information of the first remote device.

transmitting a fourth network port packet data signal comprising said status information of the first remote device to the second remote device.

20. (new) The method of claim 19 wherein said status information of said first remote device includes at least one of: busy status, ink level, paper level, print head temperature, and toner level.